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reason for a great many shadows in the picture. But there were some brighter lights, which the author has not caught. In striving to correct the undue idealization and glorification into which earlier writers commonly fell, he has gone rather far toward the other extreme of depreciation. The force of the religious motive in the migration is, we think, somewhat underestimated. And in some particulars, as the treatment of the Indians and the inconsistencies of theocratic intolerance, for example, the present author's estimates fail to take into account any of the explanatory and perhaps partially exculpatory facts to which Fiske called attention. On these two points it will do the reader no harm to supplement Mr. Adams' account with pages 226-229 and 144-146 of "The Beginnings of New England."

One of the most valuable contributions made by the book lies in the clearness with which economic and political relations with England are set forth. To some readers, the heroism of the patriots of '76 might seem unduly diminished by any suggestion that they magnified the "tyranny" of the mother country. It is on this point that the work of earlier historians is in most need of revision, and Mr. Adams has rendered American history a great service in retelling this part of the story so faithfully and so convincingly.

Typographically the book is most pleasing, and we are reminded that it is still possible to bind books well. There is an excellent index, although the preparation of an adequate index to so comprehensive a work, with its multitude of facts, was a task which many precedents would have said might be shirked. Unfortunately there is no bibliography, and the lack is only in small part made up by the careful foot-note references.

C. S. T.

Opening a Highway to the Pacific, 1838-2846. By James Christy Bell, Jr., Ph.D. [Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. XCVI, No. 1]. (New York: Columbia University, 1921. pp. 209).

This is a monograph which was written "to study the hopes and fears and ideas of a definite, and, in its way, artic-

ulate group of the American community—that body of farmers and mechanics in whose families the tradition of westward migration was imbedded through several generations after their first coming to the Virginia mountains. These ideas are to be studied in relation to certain factors which limited in some ways the existence of the pioneers, and in others opened new opportunities for their development” (Preface).

The political and diplomatic history of the Oregon controversy is almost entirely ignored; somewhat strangely, since this phase of the Oregon question involved something more than the mere politics and diplomacy, and was closely interwoven with the more romantic phases which the author wishes to depict. In one place, after a very brief discussion of political issues, we are told that “it will not be necessary to refer again to the political activities of the time, since, though they became furious, they do not appear to have exercised any great influence upon the emigrant sentiment.” Hence the neglect of politics is in keeping with the author’s declared purpose of treating the migration mainly “from the standpoint of social history, which is meant to be something more than narrow political, personal, or economic history.” Were the account of the social phases of the migration more graphic and illuminating, we could the more readily overlook this onesidedness of the history. Yet it seems rather unfortunate, at best, that the process of opening the trans-continental highway should be so completely divorced from the political agitation by which the migration was accompanied, and certainly, to some extent, influenced.

The influence of the missionary activities is also, we think, underestimated. The opening paragraph of Chapter V, “Spread of the Oregon Fever,” does not give the impression that the author is entirely sure of his ground in estimating the relative importance of missionary propaganda and of the more “spontaneous” sentiment attracting men to the Oregon country. It leaves the reader, at all events, in considerable doubt as to the exact degree of importance which the writer means to attribute to it. Chapter VI, “Agrarian

Discontent in the Mississippi Valley, 1840-1845," should have been the most important chapter in the book, for it is the author's thesis that economic difficulties and failure of crops in the Valley were the main cause of the rapid spread of the "Oregon fever." But here, again, the author does not seem quite sure of his position when he writes that "many aspects of this depression—are absolutely unknown, and must remain so until historians and economists give the period the attention which its importance merits;" and when he rather lamely adds "indeed, we must fall back upon the all but meaningless phrases, 'economic depression,' 'hard times,' etc., in our effort to describe the progress and extent of misery among the farmers."

Notwithstanding, or rather because of the paucity of sources on the economic phase of his subject, of which the author complains, a better service might have been rendered by more careful elaboration of the "economic depression" hypothesis. This, the book's main contribution, is unconvincingly and somewhat hazily treated throughout, and the footnote references do not satisfy the reader that full use has been made of even the few sources mentioned, under this topic, in the "Bibliographical Note" which is presented as an unsatisfactory substitute for a full bibliography. Thus the reader is disappointed in finding the writer's principal thesis, so alluringly set forth in the Preface, on page 9, not developed fully at all or cogently in the pages which follow. Most of the chapters are devoted to a review of the early history of the Oregon territory, its exploration and exploitation, and to an account of the hardships and experiences of the emigrants on their long journey. None of these chapters add anything considerable to previous knowledge, and the sources drawn on are mainly sources which are of fairly easy access.

The treatment of the famous "Whitman legend" is most surprising. The legend is briefly referred to in the text, but speedily dismissed as of little importance. An appendix is somewhat grudgingly accorded the myth, in order "to indicate a few ideas regarding the underlying appeal" of the

legend "which have come to me in the effort to disentangle the true from the false of early Oregon history." But the author's refutation of the legend would be far from convincing, if it had never previously been refuted; and it is entirely unnecessary in view of the fact that the late Professor E. G. Bourne demolished the "Oregon Saved" myth once and for all. But the well-known expose written by Professor Bourne some twenty or more years ago was apparently unknown to Dr. Bell, for no mention is made of it either in the text or in the bibliography.

The precedent-breaking illustrations with which this volume of the Columbia University Studies is embellished add nothing to the historical value of the work, and seem to indicate that the author was perplexed between the opposing desires of producing a book of historical importance to the student and of casual interest to the general reader. The style of the work is interesting, but is marred by occasional bits of careless writing such as "the Hudson's Bay Company, who sought to control and restrain the natives," and "the feature of national advantage was but incidental, which could not be called upon, as Astor did, when it was desired to secure popular favor."

C. S. T.

BRIEF NOTICES

The Writing of History: An Introduction to Historical Method. By Fred Morrow Fling, Ph.D. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920. pp. 195).

This brief text-book on historical method may be studied with profit by any beginner in the study of historical investigation, and may well be carefully read by all teachers of history. It is intended only as an elementary introduction to the subject, and was written "for college students who are beginning their studies in historical research, for teachers of history who have had no critical historical training, and for students of history who are hoping to find in private study some compensation for opportunities not enjoyed in college" (Foreword). The book is briefer and less